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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Thursday, March 4, 1937

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "SUMMER HOMES IN OUR NATIONAL FORESTS." Information from the Forest Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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"There are three vines that grow only in the ancient forest," says Henry Van Dyke. "Eating the berries of one, you grow wise in the wisdom of flowers. The fruit of another brings the wisdom of the birds. The third bears neither flower nor fruit, but if you find its leaves it is your fortune; if you taste them you are saved. For then the enchantment of tree-land enters your heart; the charm of the wildwood flows forever through your veins; in bustling office or noisy solitude of crowded streets you long for the friendly forest." Van Dyke called this third vine Wood-Magic.

In a recent talk, F. A. Silcox, Chief of the Forest Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, quoted Van Dyke on Wood-Magic as illustrative of one reason why the demand of American citizens for forest recreation is on the increase. In 1936 nearly 12 million persons enjoyed the various camping grounds, picnicking places, resorts, hotels and summer home sites in the National Forests. Almost 60 million more motored through to enjoy the scenery, or hiked, or rode horseback. Wood-Magic seems to appeal in greater or less degree to nearly everyone.

Improved highways and motor cars have made forested regions more accessible than they used to be. Within the past year or two much work has been done on roads and trails within the various forests. CCC boys and WPA workers have helped to open up beautiful vistas and desirable camp sites. There are more than 140 National Forests altogether, and in most regions there is a National Forest within easy reach of the more populated districts.

Forest Service officers in charge of these publicly-owned natural resources, of course, welcome visits by citizens who want to investigate the recreational possibilities offered by the National Forests near their homes. Visitors who take care not to endanger or mar the forests are at liberty to picnic or pitch a tent, and stay as long as they like. There is no fee or charge for the use of a National Forest.

In many forests the Government has provided beautiful trails for hiking, in most of them are mountains or knobs to climb, in some of them facilities for swimming and fishing! Often there are open spaces near public camp grounds for outdoor games like baseball or horseshoe pitching. And always there is wood-magic for the nature lovers -- the wild life, flowers, and trees to study.

Many of the National Forests now have sections where citizens may lease ground and build a summer home of their own. A person may usually lease up to an acre of land on a long-term plan. The rate ranges from 10 to 25 dollars a year, depending on the location. The lessor builds his own log cabin or cottage. In assigning locations, every effort is made to prevent crowding and to make provision for those who seek isolation and privacy.

If you are interested in having such a place for use this coming season, here is your procedure. First, arrange with the supervisor of the Forest where you would like to locate, for an appointment to see the sites that are available. If you do not know his address you can get it from the Forest Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D. C.

Your application for a summer home site must be in writing, and on it you must specify the location you desire, the estimated cost of the cabin you would like to build, and your willingness to cooperate with forest rules of good housekeeping -- fire prevention, proper disposal of waste, sanitation. The Forest Service will provide information on how to build your log cabin so it will endure. The application is filed with the nearest forest officer, who will notify you as soon as it is granted.

The number of private summer home sites for rental in the Eastern and Southern National Forests is necessarily limited because the needs of the heavily populated cities for public camping grounds and resorts must be taken care of first. So there are fewer areas left for permanent summer homes. No summer-home permits are granted in the White Mountain Forest in New Hampshire and Maine, or the Wichita in Oklahoma. On the other hand, in some of the great National Forests of the West summer-home developments are extensive, and do not interfere with transient public use of other parts of the Forest.

Last year about ten thousand families were occupying permanent summer cabins in national forests.

First, last, and all the time, in connection with the use of the National Forests, emphasis is placed on fire prevention. Forest fires are an ever-present menace, destroying not only much valuable timber and wild life, but also the summer homes people have been at such pains to build. Careless campers and picnickers cause a great many fires which could be easily prevented, and even the owners of cabins, who have personal property at stake, are not blameless.

The extreme need of fire protection and prevention for summer homes in forested areas is due to remoteness from fire fighting apparatus, quick-burning forest cover surrounding these home sites, structures of inflammable materials, and general carelessness with fire and fire-causing conditions. The important thing is to be alert, and to make frequent and systematic inspections, following the itemized suggestions that will be given when application for a summer-home site is granted.

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